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# MONTANA LETTER



September 20, 1974

## USDA SERVICE CENTER

The new Shelby office has the distinction of being the only pilot service center in Montana. Housed in the lovely new building are FCIC, FHA, SCS and ASCS.

The building is divided by the reception area, the machine room, rest rooms and conference room complex. On one side are FCIC and FHA with SCS and ASCS sharing the other side. One wall of the reception area is paneled, the others others have orange wallpaper. The other office areas have chartreuse wallpaper, and the curtains and carpet have green, orange and yellow print. Rather than one long sit-down counter, we have individual ones by each desk. The whole effect is bright, cheerful and modern.



*The first Montana USDA Service Center  
Shelby, Montana*

Personnel say they went into the venture with some misgivings, worrying about the noise level, lack of privacy, and just the general change. Now that they have been in the building since August 1 the consensus seems to be "They like it." With the carpeting and other acoustical barriers there is no big noise problem. You are aware that other people are working and talking,

but it seems to be muted and not unpleasant. Other worries have proved to be just as groundless.

All USDA personnel have a right to be proud of the way they have worked out the bugs in a new situation. Washington personnel toured the service center and are very pleased. In fact, they seem to feel Shelby can be held up as a shining example. They were extremely impressed with the spirit of cooperation between the agencies.

If you get the chance, visit the office and see for yourself.

## NEW CED

Henrietta Weinhold became a member of our team in July of 1942. (It was then known as AAA). She came to the Golden Valley County office as a clerk, but within 6 months was the Secretary-Treasurer - the former title for CEDs. Henrietta was married to Earl Osse in January of 1945 and left us in October of '45 to have a family of two boys and start them in school. She rejoined us as a clerk in March of 1955, became the county office manager in October of 1959 and acted in that capacity until the office was combined with Musselshell County in 1967.



*Henrietta  
Osse, CED*

Henrietta was not acting CED at the time of the recent special waiver of educational requirements so the county committee's request for a waiver had to be



handled through a different route. We are pleased that the request has finally cleared all hurdles and Henrietta is now the County Executive Director of the Golden Valley-Musselshell Counties ASCS Office.

Henrietta and Earl live in Ryegate. Earl is the Mayor and she is chairman of the March of Dimes, chairman of the Cancer Society, and a member of the Eastern Star. They are active members of the community.

Under the special waiver of education requirements referred to earlier, the following people became county executive directors: Pat Murphy - Fallon County, Bob Hamel - Lake, Floyd Colpitts - Ravalli, Hazel Michel - Valley, and Pete Schieffer - Wibaux.

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ASCS has been a part of the nation's agriculture machine for the greater part of 40 years, serving America's farmers through the Great Depression and through droughts, through production pushes and periods of overproduction. ASCS has served the American agricultural system through a time that farming grew into the 20th century--and became truly production agriculture--when agricultural technology literally exploded onto the American scene and farming became a commercial business, not just a way of life.

Our agency has served the farmer during the span of time when the total farm population declined from more than 25 percent of the population to less than 5 percent--a period when the total number of farms dropped by more than half, from nearly 7 million, down to less than 3 million. . . .

Because of changes in our nation's agriculture, our agency's role has changed. While ASCS is not fulfilling the same role or providing the same services in the agricultural machine as you did for

the past generation, or so, let me assure you that I sincerely believe that ASCS's services and ASCS's system will be needed in the years ahead. . . .

The disaster insurance provision of the '73 Act is one of the biggest, hardest jobs ASCS is involved with across the country at the present time. It's a new program, and it's a tough program to administer, to satisfy the requirements of the law and yet not get us into a billion dollar outlay before the year is over.

I cite the disaster program because this is an example of the kind of tough job ASCS--I think, probably only ASCS--can do. This year, when we went into the insurance business, as in years past, ASCS's resiliency was demonstrated. When the Congress threw you the ball on disaster payments, I never heard one comment, not one word, that we couldn't do the job. You took the ball and ran with it.

Every time you have been thrown the ball, you have run with it. Not next year, either, you always do it immediately. ASCS has always been the agency that has been able to react overnight to a new program or a new problem. This, you are well known for, and I compliment you for it.



Another example of how you respond, was the fertilizer crisis. You did a lot of good in keeping information flowing into Washington. But, more important, you were able to satisfy some needs in your counties that would not have been satisfied otherwise. . . .

So, whether it's fuel, fertilizer, baling wire and twine, pesticides, whatever, ASCS will be called upon from time to time to monitor and service local needs.

ASCS will continue to be a very necessary agency--and, if I know ASCS, the more able agency--to take on whatever assignment is needed to help farmers with their real problems. . . .



Our role is to serve rural America as a Department of Agriculture. . .ASCS is probably in a better position than any other agency, but we aim to improve on that. . .

*Excerpts from comments of Kenneth E. Frick, Administrator, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, South Carolina Association of ASCS County Office Employees, Myrtle Beach, S.C. - September 7, 1974*

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## CED TRAINEES

Our first two county executive director trainees have been selected under the new training program: George M. Lande of Pryor, and Bill Flanigan of Bozeman.

George, sometimes known as Mike, is 26 years old and a graduate of Eastern Montana College with a BS in Biological Sciences. He was raised on a cattle and hay ranch in Pryor along with his sisters, one older and one younger. He was a SP/5 in the Army for 2 years and served in both California and Vietnam. His wife, Kathy, is living in Billings during the training period. They have a two year old daughter, Michelle, that George refers to as "Sam". George's appointment became effective September 1 and he is presently payrolled in Yellowstone County.

Bill is a 24 year old, with a BS in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University. He and his wife, Debi, both were raised in Bozeman. His older brother is in the Navy. Bill has worked for ASCS in the Jefferson County and Park County offices. His appointment as trainee became effective September 1 and he is presently payrolled in Gallatin County.

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U.S. wheat export volume in fiscal 1974 totaled 31.2 million tons--1 below 1973.

## A PRIMER ON PARITY

One of the most frequently asked questions in agriculture concerns the parity index. Last week, USDA's Statistical Reporting Service issued a publication that provides the answer(s).

Agricultural Prices, August Supplement One, not only explains what the Parity Index is, but goes on to illustrate the 440 separate price series that go toward figuring it and explain the relative importance of each.

Finally, it lists both Parity Ratios and the Index of Prices Paid by Farmers -- by months -- 1968-74. Single copies of Ag. Prices, August 1974 Supplement 1, available on request.



*Trainees Bill Flanigan (l) and George Lande take a break from their book work.*

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Per capita consumption of meats seen up this year, according to USDA's Economic Research Service.

Over-all meat consumption, down in the past two years, is expected to be up 6 pct. from last year, totaling 186 lbs. compared to 175.7 lbs. last year. Increases forecast: beef-5%, veal-6%, pork-7%, lamb and mutton--down 15%.



## CATTLE PROSPECTS

The "Western Livestock Roundup" published by the Extension Service reports that total cattle numbers are expected to show a large increase next January 2, with a further upswing likely during 1975. Total slaughter of cattle and calves this year is likely to be near 38 million head. Even if the death loss were as high as last year, the slaughter and death loss would be about 6 million head less than the calf crop.

Some slackening in fed cattle prices is likely unless retail beef prices increase further. Even with a considerable surge in nonfed slaughter, choice slaughter steers could easily stay in the high \$40's the rest of this year, because of low expected marketings of fed cattle.

Feeder prices are not likely to show strength because of the higher prices of feed grains. Supplies of feed grains for feeding livestock are likely to be down by 10-15 percent.

Smaller feed supplies and higher prices this year than previously, along with prospects for sluggish cattle prices in late 1974 and much of 1975, indicate continued stress on cattle feeding firms. Adjustment in feeding practices that promises some relief from high costs and negative returns include: using heavier replacement cattle in feed yards; faster turnover- keeping cattle on feed for shorter feeding periods; and marketing slaughter cattle with less finish.

With a shorter feeding period for fed cattle, fed marketings will not be down as much as inventories on feed. Thus, marketings of fed cattle as a percent of total number on feed will increase. (This information was based on data available through August 27, 1974.)

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Drive like H\_\_, and you may get there!

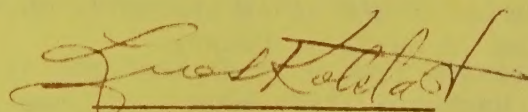
## FARM SURVEYS SOON UNDERWAY

The Montana Crop and Livestock Reporting Service will be mailing their fall Acreage and Production questionnaires in mid-October. Later, they will conduct an interview-type survey and several specialized livestock surveys. These will wrap up the 1974 crop season, estimate winter wheat seedings, and collect information on end of the year livestock numbers.

In your daily contacts with producers, please urge them to respond accurately & timely to these surveys. As you know, some of the ASCS work uses county & State information from these surveys. Statistics in general are used and needed by producers and their organizations. This is especially true this year when marketing is dependent upon the export market. We must be informed on what we have to market--the quantity, quality & location--in order to compete on the world market.

## SPREADING IT THIN...AND QUICK

THE 1974-CROP LOAN AND PURCHASE rate for corn in Montana is \$1.19 in all counties. The loan rate is for corn grading no. 2, except for moisture. This is an increase of 5 cents over 1973 in Montana....U.S. AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS during fiscal 1974 were valued at \$9.5 billion, up 30 percent from the year earlier level.....AUSTRALIAN WHEAT PLANTINGS for 1974-75 will approximate 22.9 million acres, slightly above planting intentions of 22.4 million acres reported earlier.....A CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE is scheduled this year, a job done every 5 years. During the last of December some 4.5 million forms will be mailed to farmers to fill in and return.



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